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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICA COLLECTIVE
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0002

UNCLAS BELMOPAN 000055

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y. ADDED PARA MARKINGS
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FOR WHA/CEN - R. BEAL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [BH](#)

SUBJECT: BELIZE: ELECTION POLLS SUGGEST SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT
OUTCOMES

REF: BELMOPAN 08

11. (SBU) Two recent polls suggest significantly different outcomes for the February 7 national elections in Belize. A survey by SPEAR, the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research, projects turnout close to 90%, and gives the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) the edge over the ruling People's United Party (PUP). Over 50% of respondents, however, said that they were undecided or said that their vote was confidential and did not reveal it to the pollsters. On the question of "are you better off now than you were 10 years ago," the respondents were almost evenly split. Using statistical techniques to slice and dice the "undecideds" and "confidentials," SPEAR concludes that one possible outcome on election day will be: UDP - 54%, PUP - 37% and third parties - 9%. (A summary of the poll can be found at www.spear.org.bz.)

12. (SBU) A second poll, conducted by University of Belize Professor Joseph Iyo and Galen University Professor Marion Cayetano, gives significantly different results. Their analysis has the PUP returning to power with 48.9% of the vote, the UDP getting 42.7% and the remainder of the vote split among third parties. Their results district-by-district are almost exactly the opposite of the SPEAR poll, with Iyo/Cayetano showing the PUP leading -- sometimes by significant margins -- in four of the country's six districts including the crucial Belize district which has over a third of the House seats.

13. (SBU) Opinion research is not an exact science in Belize by any means, and both of these surveys have methodological issues. SPEAR's relied on randomly-selected telephone landline owners, while the Iyo/Cayetano poll relied on face-to-face contact in each constituency. Neither group of respondents may in the end prove to be completely representative of the electorate. SPEAR does, however, have a reasonably good reputation for objectivity and has had some success at calling elections in the past. Indeed, the poll released prior to the municipal elections in March 2006 correctly forecast that result. In addition, the SPEAR results seem to track with the anecdotal evidence we are getting of an electorate that increasingly thinks 10 years of PUP government has been enough.

DIETER